

Chapter 11

Plant Lands near Plant's Yard

SOME 18TH CENTURY PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS BY PLANTS NEAR PLANT'S YARD¹

October 1995. One of a series of Chapters by Dr. John S. Plant, Keele University, England, ST5 5BG.

There seem to have been few *known* Plants throughout a wide area of several parishes around the site of Plant's Yard in Little Sheffield, around 1800 — the *available* data for such Plant properties appear to relate to a bricklayer John and a bellows-maker Benjamin. As will be described further later (Chapter 12), some relatives of the wife of this Benjamin Plant were prominent in the administration of Ecclesall and the neighbouring town of Sheffield, by the late 18th century, and Plant properties can be traced through these times which feature the (1779-88) Parliamentary Act for the Enclosure of Common Lands in Ecclesall. The repercussions of this Act form a key episode in Sheffield's developing destiny of progressing from being a small town to becoming, a century later, a major industrial city.

11.1 Ecclesall Plants

The chapelry of Ecclesall in the parish of Sheffield extends SW from central Sheffield towards Dore. In part, it lies between the Porter Brook and the River Sheaf but, near the site of Plant's Yard in Little Sheffield², it extended north of the Porter to include the ancient estate of Broom-hall and the common land of (Little) Sheffield Moor.

The bellows maker *Ben(bellows)* (1742-1806), or '*Benjamin Plant of Sheffield Moor*' as he is known in a standard work on Sheffield's history³, is shown later in this Chapter to have held various properties around the edges of (Little) Sheffield Moor in Ecclesall. A foretaste of impending developments here, in Benjamin's lifetime, can be found in an early eighteenth century couplet, which is associated with a visit of Lord Oxford to Sheffield in 1725⁴...

*'When Sheffield Moor is ploughed and sown
Then Little England look to thine own'*

though it was not ploughing and sowing to which (Little) Sheffield Moor was to succumb. To the Moor's immediate west was Broom Hall.

¹Including data supplied by José King of Sheffield Archives and by Pat Clark of the Local Studies Centre, Sheffield City Libraries.

²Little Sheffield was a separate hamlet, about a mile to the south of Sheffield town, with (Little) Sheffield Moor lying between the two.

³*Peeps into the Past: being passages from the diary of Thomas Asline Ward*, edited by A.B.Bell, 1909.

⁴This is described in the book '*The Manor and Parish of Ecclesall; including the enclosure of Common and Waste Land there*' by Carolus Paulus (1927), Chapter V.

11.1.1 The Gells and Eyres of Broom Hall in Ecclesall

The IGI⁵ suggests that an ancestral home of the Plants in the region was around 15 miles SW of Sheffield in the parishes of Bakewell, Great Longstone and Edensor⁶. A 1538 Bakewell deed⁷ shows that a Christopher Plant was leasing estate there from Ralf Gell of Hopton, whose fortunes were based on wool and lead mining. Christopher Plant was apparently Gell's bailiff. Ralf Gell's son enhanced the family fortunes sufficiently, with legal fees, to buy the Manors of Wirksworth and Carsington and founded Wirksworth School. It was Sir John Gell of Hopton who, a century later, kept Derbyshire under firm Roundhead control throughout the Civil War and held Sheffield Castle, controlling Sheffield and Rotherham, in 1642-3.

From around these times, the Eyre family repeatedly married into the Jessop family of Broom Hall and in particular, one such spouse called John Eyre changed his name to John Gell of Hopton on inheriting the Gell fortunes through the death of his mother around the start of the 18th century. The Eyre family is noted, for example, for having built a new Catholic chapel at North Lees near Hathersage following the accession of James II to the throne in 1685. The home of the Eyre family was at Highlow, Hathersage, which is roughly midway between Bakewell and Sheffield.

It seems that the Plants may have come to Sheffield and Rotherham around the times of the Gell's Parliamentary sympathies with Sheffield⁸. The advance of Gell's parliamentary forces on Sheffield in the Civil war was followed by Gell connections with the Eyres and Broom Hall. It may be more than just coincidence that in 1764 a Robert Plant married Anne Eyre at Edensor, some 15 miles SW of Sheffield, and a Tho Plant married Mary Eyre there in 1766 around the time when *Ben(bellows)* came 10 miles from the south to Sheffield and acquired Broom-hall land.

In 1777 John Eyre's son, Philip Gell (1723-1795), leased his ancient estate at Bakewell to the famous industrialist Sir Richard Arkwright, who is sometimes called '*the father of the industrial age*', and the road called Via Gellia was cut to connect Gell's mines around Wirksworth with the Cromford Canal, which opened in 1793. This Philip Gell was co-owner of the Broom-hall estate near Sheffield and he was clearly familiar with some key major aspects of the so-called Industrial Revolution.

Immediately to the east of Broom Hall was (Little) Sheffield Moor and this was rapidly developed after being divided into small allotments in 1788 at the time of the Parliamentary Enclosure Award for Ecclesall. The British Prime Minister of 1765 and 1782, the Marquis of Rockingham Charles Watson Wentworth, had married Mary Bright on 27.2.1752 and he and his Fitzwilliam heirs, of the prominent Whig House of Wentworth, had thereby become the Lords of Ecclesall Manor. The By-Laws of Ecclesall Byerlow were administered by the Lord's Court Baron and Court Leet and, in 1826, some 17 years before their work became unnecessary, Benjamin Plant's friend and nephew, Samuel Broomhead Ward (Figure 11.1), was the foremost person of these courts, the Foreman of the Jurors⁹. *Ben(bellows)*'s nephew, S.B.Ward, hence presided over such Juries as the Homage Jury whose members included such as Edward Harwood who had also been appointed to the additional duty of Special Constable for Button Lane on (Little) Sheffield Moor, which was by then in a built up area not far from a site that was becoming widely known as Plant's Yard.

11.1.2 Uncertain origins of the name Plant in Ecclesall

It seems that there were Plants in Ecclesall at least from as early as the mid eighteenth century. As will be described more fully below, there are entries '*Late Plant yard*' in 1779 and 1786 Ecclesall rate books (Table 11.2) and it seems possible that these could refer to property that had belonged to an earlier generation of Plants.

⁵*International Genealogical Index*, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (1992).

⁶J.S.Plant (Jan 1992) *Roots and Branches*, 3, pps.12-15.

⁷*Official Guide to the Old House Museum Bakewell*, Bakewell and District Historical Society (1984), page 2.

⁸There is a Sheffield baptism entry for a Ruth to a John Plant on 15.3.1737.

⁹This was published in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independant* (1st April 1826) whose editor was another nephew of Benjamin Plant, Thomas Asline Ward (Figure 11.2).

(a) 1772 Land Tax records			(b) 1773-4 Rate Book	
...			...	
own	Enock Tickeyt	5/7½	Enoch Trickit	1/6
own	Mr Farebank	3/9	Mr Fairbank	1/-
2	Widow Middleton	1/3	Widw Midleton	4
own	Benjn Plant		Benjn Plant	6
Benjn Plant	& Mrs Redfearn Houses	5/7½	& for Mr Redfearns	1/-
Mr Smith	Mrs William Smith	3/9	Mr Wm Smith	1/-
own	Elkana Roberts	2/6	Elkana Roberts	8
Mr Newbold	Mrs Newbold or Tenant	5/7½	Mr Newbould Wheel	2/-
...			...	
Broomhall	Mrs Broomhead Wheel	7/6	Late ?Hents	10
	& Stalker Field	2/6	& Broomhall Land	10
...			...	

Table 11.1: Some early 1770's records

There is no immediately clear indication of earlier Plant property here, though there are separate references to Benjamin Plant in property records dating back to the early 1770's (Table 11.1). There are relatively few available records for before the 1788 Parliamentary Enclosure Award for Ecclesall though some *possibly relevant* early information has been found in such records as a few poor relief rate books, land tax and window tax records which, for before 1779, are part of the Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments in Sheffield Archives¹⁰.

The closest known explanation, in earlier papers, for the 1779 and 1786 entries '*Late Plant yard*' is represented by a 1774 entry '*Late ?Kents (10d) & Broomhall Land (10d)*'. This entry, in a 1774 rate book (Table 11.1(b)), might be thought to tally with later 1793-5 Plant property records that also mention Broomhall land (Table 11.4). This postulated *possible* connection can be traced back to 1742-3 rate books which contain '*Richard ?Kont (1/8d) and for Broomhall Land (1/4d)*'. Earlier 1729 Window Tax records include an entry '*Rich ?Kent (6d)*'.

The 1729 handwritten surname in *Rich ?Kent* is not dissimilar to *Plont* written in one of the various styles that had proliferated by 1700 after Secretary Hand gave way to Italic Hand¹¹. An ambiguously written *Plont* could have been copied to a more definite *Kent* and a Richard Plont, in an area where Plant's were previously unknown, may have inadvertently acquired *Kent* as an alias — indeed, bearing in mind that aliases were more commonplace at those times, he may have kept *Kent* as his alias in order to preserve his property rights,

In particular, such a theory would explain why the 1774 entry '*Late ?Kents ...*' is replaced with '*Late Plant yard*' in 1779 following the arrival in Sheffield of *Ben(bellows)* with a neat signature that was incontrovertibly *Plant*. This simple theory, of *Plont* being aliased to *Kent*, could also be applied to such facts as:-

- there is a stubborn gap around 1700 in the local Plant family history record, at a time when writings could confuse *Plont* and *Kent*, and
- the 1741 Master Cutler was called Richard Kent before *Ben(bellows)* became closely associated with several Master Cutlers¹².

¹⁰These records are part of the William Bright collection (B.P. 103-110) and acknowledgement is accordingly made to Olive, Countess Fitzwilliam's Settlement Trustees and the Director of Sheffield City Libraries for access to them.

¹¹The downstroke of an *l* could easily convert *P* to *K* and the similarity of *o* and *e* at those times is well known. For further evidence of contemporary handwriting styles, see Terrick V H FitzHugh (1985) *The Dictionary of Genealogy*, page 266 and Eve McLaughlin (1990) *Further Steps in Family History*, page 43.

¹²The IGI indicates that the name Kent was generally rare throughout Yorkshire and Derbyshire, apart from a cluster at Rotherham about 6 miles NE of Sheffield. Surprisingly, there are as many as 4 Richard Kents of a roughly suitable age to have been the 1741 Master Cutler, all baptised at Rotherham, and one of these (bap 18.10.1694) had a brother William (bap 30.11.1700) of a suitable age to tally with *W^m(0)* of Figure 11.1.

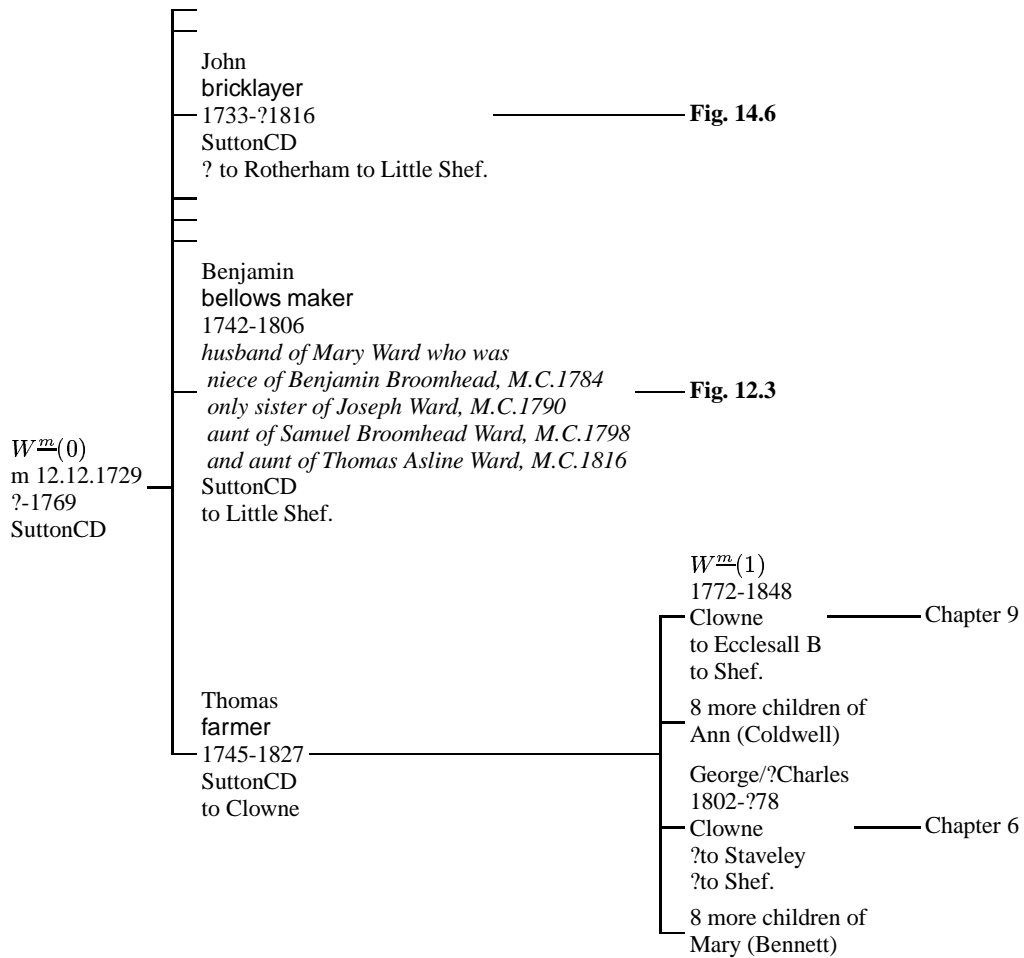


Figure 11.1: Some Plants associated with Little Sheffield

(a) 1779: 2d in £		(b) 1786: 6d in \$	
...		Joseph Sampson	8
...		Mr Ibbotson	1/8
Mr Fairbank	1/-	And for Wheel	4
Widw Middleton	4	...	
Mr Plant	1/-	Benjn Plant	2/-
Ellena Roberts	8	And for Roberts	1/4
Mr Newbold Wheel	2/-	...	
...		Late Plant yard	2/4
Late Plant yard	1/2	Mr Sykes for Gibbet	7/0
...		...	
Mr Ibbotson Wheel	2/-	Plant $3\frac{1}{2}$ Unwin $6\frac{1}{2}$	1/8

Table 11.2: Some pre-Enclosure Award rate book entries

For the moment, however, suffice it to note that the available evidence *may be* amenable to an interpretation that there could have been a Richard *Plont* in Ecclesall by 1729. It is uncertain, however, whether there was a close connection with, for example, a Richard Pl(o/a)nt(e) who married on 21.8.1682 at Great Longstone (Chapter 2) though it can immediately be said that *this* marriage seems too early to tally with a notion that *this* could have been the 1741 Master Cutler Richard Kent who may have been related to a Rotherham Kent family.

11.1.3 Uncertain location of ‘Late Plant yard’

It seems uncertain that the Ecclesall entries ‘*Late Plant yard*’ in 1779 and 1786 (Table 11.2) apply to the site subsequently known as *Plant’s Yard* in Little Sheffield (Chapter 10).

It may be helpful to try to clarify some details of these times. It seems that Benjamin Plant was still, in 1784, living a mile to the north of Little Sheffield in Coalpit Lane at the SW edge of Sheffield town. By 1787, Benjamin’s brother John had moved to Little Sheffield (Chapter 10) and John and Benjamin had acquired two adjacent pieces of land at Broom Close in Little Sheffield, at least by 1798 (Chapter 13).

We might attempt to guess at a date of purchase of this Little Sheffield property, which *may have been* around the time of John Plant’s arrival in Little Sheffield from Rotherham, perhaps around 1787. On the other hand the rate book entry ‘*Late Plant yard*’ occurs clearly in 1779 and 1786, at a time when it is uncertain that the Plants were established in Little Sheffield. This leaves us to ponder whether, for example, this Broom Close site could have been called *Late Plant yard* whilst it was being owned temporarily by Edward Shepherd, from whom the Plants bought the site¹³ that was to become widely known some years later as *Plant’s Yard*.

Some further relevant information *may be* forthcoming in due course, perhaps from some early property deeds¹⁴. For the moment, however, our considerations need to be left open to such possibilities as one that *Late Plant yard*, and perhaps also the earlier *Late ?Kents ...*, were nearer central Sheffield, before its expansion, where they *may have* had some commercial significance.

¹³This is indicated in subsequent property deeds.

¹⁴The Wakefield index of the registered versions of deeds is alphabetical from 1794 onwards but, from 1704 to 1793, it consists of 25 volumes which are alphabetical in initial letter only, so that the entire ‘P’ (and ‘K’) section in every volume would have to be searched (I am grateful to the Principal Archivist of the West Yorkshire Archive Sevice, Michael Bottomley, for assisting with such information). A full search of the Plant entries has accordingly been made (so far) only for 1794-1863.

11.1.4 Some pre-1786 rate books

A 1779 Ecclesall rate book, signed on the 6th September 1779, states a Poor Relief rate of 2d in the pound. The rate increases threefold to 6d in a rate book of 27 June 1786, though the individual instalments typically double as indicated in Table 11.2.

Though the items are listed in a rather different order in the 1786 rate book, it may be noted for example that the 1779 entry '*Mr Plant*' appears almost next to an entry '*Mr Newbold Wheel*' and similar proximity is apparent in the earlier records of Table 11.1. The entry '*Mr Newbold Wheel*' no doubt refers to the Newbould family's water wheel, the Broomhall Wheel, on Broom-hall land near the site that was subsequently widely known as *Plant's Yard* and, as will be explained more fully later, there appears to have been a close relationship between Benjamin Plant's wife's family, the Wards, and the Newboulds.

There is also, in 1786 (Table 11.2(b)), a reference to Joseph Sampson who also appears in the 1774 rate book and who may have been a relative of the Samuel Sampson who married Benjamin's daughter, Mary Ward Plant, in 1788. There is an associated reference to *J.Sampson* in 1800 in the diary of Benjamin Plant's nephew, T.A.Ward, as will be described more fully in Chapter 12. The 1786 entry for Sampson is next to one for *Ibbotson and his Wheel* and there was a close connection between Benjamin Plant and this Ibbotson, as will be described further later.

11.1.5 Two Early Deeds

The name Roberts, in particular Elkana Roberts, seems closely associated with the name of Benjamin Plant in 1772-86 records (Tables 11.1 and 11.2) and just such an association occurs at Coalpit Lane on Sheffield's SW edge in a 1784 property deed which refers back to earlier times. This deed refers back as far as the demise of a cutler Joseph Down(e)s to a cutler Samuel Thwaites, in 1695, though it does not indicate how a Plant connection had subsequently arisen.

A 1794 Deed in the name of the bellows maker Benjamin Plant (DO-684-836) refers to an earlier 1784 deed (20 Dec 1784) registered at Wakefield on 18 April 1785 (CQ-240-350). This 1784 deed is between '*Benjamin Plant of Coalpit Lane otherwise Cowpit Lane Bellowsmaker and Joseph Kay of Sheffield aforesaid penknifemaker*¹⁵' and concerns a '*piece or parcel of a Close situate lying and being at the South West End of the Town of Sheffield on the west side of the Cowpit Lane called Balm Croft alias Garlick Croft*'. The ground is specified to contain '*the House of the said Joseph Downes as the same was demised and let by the said Joseph Downes cutler to Samuel Thwaites cutler in and by a certain Indenture of Lease bearing date*' 25 March 1695 '*for the Term of seven hundred and ninety five years*'. The ground is also stated to contain '*those three Tenements or Dwellinghouses thereon erected and built together with the Garden and Yard thereto belonging as the same premises were heretofore in the several possessions of Elkanah Roberts the Elder, Elkanah Roberts the Younger and now of the said Elkanah Roberts the Younger ... and James Bennet*'. This 1784 deed also mentions '*and all outhouses Edifices Buildings Barns Stables Yards Orchards Gardens Ways Watercourses Easements ...*'.

A 1771 map¹⁶ taken together with measurements in later deeds suggest that this 1784 deed might apply to a strip of properties extending about 46 yards between Coalpit Lane and the parallel Back Lane which backed onto open ground near the head of (Little) Sheffield Moor. This 'Balm Croft' property may have been near 'Balm Green' which lay away from the turnpiked road from Sheffield to Chesterfield at the far end of Coalpit Lane.

11.1.6 Some contemporary developments

Development from this south west boundary of Sheffield town was encouraged by the Ecclesall Enclosure Act (1779-88), since it divided the common of (Little) Sheffield Moor into small allot-

¹⁵The later 1794 deed was in the names of '*Benjamin Plant late of ... Cowpit Lane ... but now of Little Sheffield ... Bellowsmaker Joseph Kay of Sheffield ... Gentleman ... heretofore penknifemaker and Elizabeth Pitt of Carlton in the parish of Royston in the said County of York Widow*'.

¹⁶This map is entitled '*A Correct Plan of the Town of Sheffield in the County of York Drawn by Wm Fairbank 1771*'.

ments which were of little use except for building. This partitioning led to the spread down the Moor of Sheffield's buildings from Coal-pit Lane at its head, where Benjamin Plant held property, subsequently to engulf the site later known as *Plant's Yard* in the hitherto separate hamlet of Little Sheffield just south west of the Porter Brook at the foot of the Moor — the ancient estate of Broom Hall, which lay immediately to the west of this Sheffield Moor development, did not escape its impact.

11.2 Parliamentary Enclosure near Sheffield

Nationally, the procedure of Enclosure by Acts of Parliament had begun around 1710, though it was not until the 1760-1820 reign of King George III that many applications were made. The results of the application for Ecclesall, which began in 1779, have been written about widely as a key episode in enabling Sheffield's subsequent growth. The following account mentions the particular role of *Ben(bellows)'s* wife's family, the Wards, as well as the impact of these tumultuous times on the Vicar of Sheffield, who was co-owner with Philip Gell of the Broom Hall estate — this rather well known and controversially regarded Vicar, the Rev James Wilkinson, was a cousin of Philip Gell whose family *apparently* had rather ancient associations with the Plants.

11.2.1 Parliamentary Enclosure for Ecclesall

Enclosure for Ecclesall, which was the first by Parliamentary Act near Sheffield, took place between 1779 and 1788; and for Upper and Nether Hallam between 1791 and 1805. Earlier Ecclesall had included Upper and Nether Hallam and, in 1819, each was still electing an Ecclesall Chapel Warden. In his standard work on Sheffield parish¹⁷, Hunter records an irregular boundary to the north of Ecclesall because of the difficulties of separating it from the neighbouring two Hallams at the time of the Parliamentary Enclosure of Common and Waste Lands there. Despite Hunter's use of the term 'Ecclesall township' in his 1819 work, it was still sparsely populated, especially to the west.

11.2.2 Public discontent

Significant beneficiaries of the 1788 Ecclesall award included the Duke of Norfolk and Benjamin Plant's young friend and nephew, Samuel Broomhead Ward (1770-1849). In general the 1788 Enclosure Award offered advantage to some highly-placed residents and large holders.

This first Enclosure Act near Sheffield brought the nature of the general process of Parliamentary Enclosure to the widespread attention of the local inhabitants and this brought with it a growth of public discontent. The 1788 Act deemed that 3412 acres of Ecclesall were occupied already leaving 806 acres for the Enclosure Award. Earlier enclosures of less than 40 years standing were not recognised. Discontent arose in particular amongst a large number of the owners and occupiers of tofts and messuages who suffered loss in as much as the compensatory *small* allotments were of no direct use to them in connection with their traditional right to pasture or turn geese on the common. When it became known that the Ecclesall Act was to be followed by one for the Hallams, a public notice of opposition was posted in the *Sheffield Register* (6th September 1787). Despite general awareness of such growing opposition, application for the Hallam Act was delayed no longer when George Wood took over as Master Cutler from Benjamin Plant's brother-in-law, Joseph Ward (Figure 11.2), in 1791.

The 1791 Broom Hall disturbance

The situation then became alarming.

The Vicar of Sheffield, the Master Cutler and a town trustee petitioned the Home Office for military aid claiming the arrival in Sheffield of fugitives from a very different riot in Birmingham.

¹⁷Joseph Hunter (1819) *Hallamshire: The History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York*.

Aid was forthcoming in the form of a company of Light Dragoons from Nottingham, which caused commotion on their arrival in Sheffield on 27 June 1791. A riotous element of the crowd that gathered outside the Tontine Inn went on to release prisoners from the jail in King Street and then on to Broom-hall, the residence of the Vicar Wilkinson, where they caused substantial damage before their dispersal by the army¹⁸. Thirteen prisoners were taken, of which eight were released with a caution. The remaining five were sent to York, heavily laden in irons, where four of them were acquitted but a John Bennet(t) was found guilty of setting fire, with three others who had escaped, to the library in Broom Hall and to the haystacks outside.

In his book, Carolus Paulus states that the 'youthful' John Bennet was hanged, though he gives two conflicting dates for this (7 Sep and 20 Sep 1791) and some dispute has been broadcast on the local radio in recent years as to whether the death sentence was ever carried out, or whether some crude technique was offered instead to alter Bennet's personality before a surreptitious release.

Various John Bennets

It has to be viewed with suspicion, however, that this John Bennet was in any way related to a John Bennet who owned property next to Benjamin Plant's properties in Coal-pit Lane, shortly afterwards in 1793 (*cf* the James Bennet who appears in the 1784 property deed for Coalpit Lane described above).

Certainly any association can be dismissed with the bachelor John Bennet who subsequently became a close associate of another of Benjamin Plant's nephews, Charles Plant from Clowne (Figure 11.1 and Chapter 6) as this John Bennet (d 21.12.1835) was probably Charles Plant's uncle, who would have been too young (bap 7.4.1782 Hague Common, Staveley) to fit the role of the guilty party. The father of this uncle of Charles was also called John Bennet but he would have been too old to be described as 'youthful' in 1791.

It may be pointed out, more generally, that the name Bennet(t) was not uncommon in the area.

The Public View

Rightly or wrongly, the populace blamed Vicar Wilkinson of Broom-hall for being one of the main promoters of Parliamentary Enclosure and his unpopularity did not cease with John Bennet's death sentence. The Ecclesall Enclosure award had ruled against Vicar Wilkinson and Philip Gell in their claim that Broom-hall should be placed outside the jurisdiction of the Lord of the Manor and this failed challenge may have left some resentments in high places. Furthermore, whilst the Lord of the Manor himself had gained little allotment, the Vicar had obtained 20 acres which may have helped to fuel his unpopularity with the poor.

In one of his historical works¹⁹, Robert Eadon Leader records the story of a little girl who was incited by mischievous fellows to go up to a gentleman and say:

*'They burnt his books
And scared his rooks
And set his stacks on fire'*

The gentleman, who was none less than the Vicar himself, replied "What my dear?". The little girl repeated the chant prompting the reply "Yes my dear, come along with me" whence he led her to the stocks to her great distress.

11.2.3 The Plant's neighbouring position

We can not be sure whether the Plant family's ancient association with the Gells caused *Ben(bellows)'s* sympathies to extend to Philip Gell's cousin, the Vicar, after the 1791 conflagration at Broom Hall.

¹⁸The damage at Broom-hall included much to the Library which had been collected by the Rev Wilkinson's great-grandfather, Francis Jessop, one of the earliest members of the Royal Society.

¹⁹R.E.Leader, *Sheffield of the 18th Century* (1901) page 240.



Figure 11.2: Joseph Ward (1745-1820) and his son T.A.Ward (1781-1871)

We may note however that the Broom-hall estate included five water wheels along the Porter Brook just to the north of the subsequent *Plant's Yard* — Benjamin Plant's step-father-in-law, Samuel Broomhead, was tenant of one of these, the Stalker Wheel, by 1765 and this was inherited by Benjamin's brother-in-law, Joseph Ward, by 1794, at which time Benjamin himself acquired land near another, the Broomhall Wheel, as will be described more fully towards the end of this Chapter.

It may also be recalled that *Ben(bellows)'s* close friend and nephew, Samuel Broomhead Ward, had been amongst the main beneficiaries of the 1788 Ecclesall Award and so it seems unlikely that *he* would have been *violently* opposed to the practice of Enclosure in general. It can added, however, that Benjamin Plant's brother-in-law, Joseph Ward, had not *himself* applied for *further* Parliamentary Enclosure in *his* year of office as Master Cutler, in the year preceding the disturbance. T.A.Ward, who was another nephew of Benjamin Plant, was only 10 at that time but there is substantial later evidence for his own lack of enthusiasm for autocratic rule, such that it would have been quite out of character for *him* (and, by then, probably some other rich people, as well as the general populace) to be seen as sharing the Vicar's readiness for a military imposition of further Parliamentary Enclosure.

Ben(bellows)'s young nephew, Thomas Asline Ward (Chapter 12), is know in Sheffield history largely for his *popularity* with the poor, often espousing their causes, though he was himself rich. In the book *Peeps into the Past*, which summarises T.A.Ward's diary, the editor A.B.Bell comments²⁰ '*Mr Wilkinson (the Vicar), we may be sure, would be in his element (with the military) for he was a Clergyman who literally belonged to the Church militant ... His stern administration of the law — for he was a magistrate as well as a clergyman — stood between him and popularity at times.*' Despite his more liberal views, T.A.Ward's sympathies would surely *not* have extended to rioting against the Vicar, however, and, in his diary, he records the full memorial sermon for the Vicar (d 1805 aged 75) which includes "*And here I must mention an event which is to the disgrace of this town and to our nature. At one time of his life, Mr W—, engaged in the faithful and conscientious*

²⁰This comment is made in the connection with the fact that, in 1804, the young T.A.Ward served a fortnight in training at Doncaster, as a Lieutenant of the Sheffield Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, after which the officers dined with Rev Wilkinson at the Tontine.

A. R. P.			Situation	Name of Allottee	
320	0	0	7	Sharrow Moor	John Plant
247	0	0	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	Brincliffe Edge Common	Benjamin Plant
247A	0	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Brincliffe Edge Common	Benjamin Plant

Table 11.3: Plant Allotments in the 1788 Enclosure Award

discharge of his duty, incurred the odium and resentment of designing men, who, enemies to peace and good government, would have proceeded to further outrages, if possible."²¹.

11.2.4 Plant allotments

Benjamin Plant, and his presumed brother John, had been awarded small allotments in the 1788 Ecclesall Act, as indicated in Table 11.3²².

Benjamin's allotment *No.*247 was only around 439 square yards but its location holds some interest. Its location is shown on a map in a book by Carolus Paulus²³ and it appears in a later, more detailed 1850 map to be near a few trees called 'Rustling Place' where a track led from Greystones Road about 500 yards northwards to 'Rustling Farm' past a few buildings called the 'Rustlings'.

A rate book for 6 Jan 1800 includes, under *Saml Newbold* and his aforementioned *Wheel*, a substantially charged entry '*ditto for Ruslings*' suggesting that the area known as '*Rustlings*' was, at that time owned, or being leased, by the Newboulds who are known to have been associates of Benjamin Plant's wife's family²⁴. A deed registered on 5 Aug 1802 records the transfer from Benjamin Plant to James Beal, for \$50, of Benjamin's adjacent allotments (247 and 247A of Table 11.3 which adjoined the Rustlings) which are described as '*ground commonly called Rottenspot at the bottom of Brincliffe Edge ... containing ... sixteen perches ... be the same more or less ... ground ... allotted and awarded by the Commissioners to the said Benjamin Plant ... and also all that barn laith or building thereon erected and built together with all ways, waters, watercourses, hedges, ditches, gates, styles ...*'.

This location was about 1.5 miles to the west of the Little Sheffield site that was to become widely known as Plant's Yard and it is where, some 50 years later in 1851, the widow of a William Plant²⁵, who was a nephew of Benjamin Plant, was to be found with her son-in-law William Roberts.

11.3 Plant properties around 1794

The post-Parliamentary Enclosure Award rate books are, in general, more detailed than those in section 11.1.4. By 1793, we find Benjamin Plant's properties listed both under Coal-pit Lane and under Little Sheffield, to the north and the south of (Little) Sheffield Moor, and it seems that he also acquired properties to the Moor's east and beyond *Rustlings* to the west.

²¹It may be noted that the Vicar's name has been abbreviated here to Mr W—. Some rather similar comments to those made about the Vicar could perhaps be applied to S.B.Ward's first father-in-law, the 1787 Master Cutler Jonathan Watkinson, who attained widespread infamy in a long remembered Music Hall song as a result of his presiding over the '*Thirteen to a Dozen*' controversy and who was commonly referred to, with some slanderous innuendo, as W— (Chapter 12).

²²The units 'A. R. P.' in this Table denote 'acres, roods and *square* poles'. A pole, or perch, or rod were all the same measure, with a *square* pole equalling 30.25 square yards and 160 *square* poles = 4 roods = 1 acre.

²³Carolus Paulus (1927) *The Manor and Parish of Ecclesall; including the enclosure of Common and Waste Lands there*, Chapter XV.

²⁴*Peeps into the Past: being passages from the diary of Thomas Asline Ward*, *ibid.*

²⁵This is *W^m*(1) of Figure 11.1 and Chapter 9.

11.3.1 Coal-pit Lane

In the 1793-5 rate books for Coal-pit Lane to the north of Sheffield Moor on the edge of Sheffield town, there are 13 houses in the name of John Bennet which are followed by 4 houses in the name of Benjamin Plant (payments 2/- 9d 3d $2/3\frac{3}{4}$). The fourth property of Benjamin Plant has *?C Roberts* written alongside in the rate book of 20 March 1795, which may be compared with the mention of *Elkana(h) Roberts* in conjunction with Benjamin Plant in the pre-Enclosure rate books and in a 1784 Coal-pit Lane property deed (section 11.1.5). These four entries for Benjamin's houses are followed by Joseph Smith's properties (a house, shops, and Clogg Field) and then by Benjamin Plant's 5th to 17th premises listed under Coal-pit Lane (all are described as houses except for the 10th, 12th, and 13th, which are described as shops).

Benjamin's neighbour J.F.Smith

Benjamin Plant's neighbour here was the 1796 Master Cutler, Joseph Fletcher Smith, who holds the distinction of being the first Master Cutler with a double barrelled name. He is also the one who signed the document granting Freedom of the Company of Cutlers to his relative, Joseph Hunter, who later became a close friend of Benjamin Plant's nephew, T.A.Ward, before becoming known as the celebrated author of the aforementioned 1819 book on 'Hallamshire'. A link between Benjamin Plant's nephew, T.A.Ward, and Benjamin's neighbour, J.F.Smith, is apparent by 1804 as the 23 year old Ward writes with dry humour in his diary on 30 Dec 1804 "*This day died Mr.J.F.Smith in the strength of his age, a victim of his own excessive love of good eating and drinking, and a too great dislike for employment.*"²⁶. J.F.Smith's grandfather was the 1722 Master Cutler, John Smith, who started the old Coal-pit Lane cutlery business that expired on 14 July 1807 with the death of J.F.Smith's nephew, John Smith. Some Joseph Fletcher Smith table knives have been handed down my family, presumably down the line *Ben(bellows)* - *W^m(1)* - *W^m(2a)* - James - Tom to my late father Tom junior, and they have been presumed to have originated from a neighbourly connection between J.F.Smith and the bellows maker Benjamin Plant.

11.3.2 Total rate payments in Ecclesall

Five rate books have survived for the year 1793-4 with similar instalments recorded as paid in each book. The 17 premises of Benjamin Plant in Coal-pit Lane attracted, for each instalment, a total charge of $13/6\frac{3}{4}d$ which, when added to Benjamin's payments for other properties in Ecclesall Bierlow gives $\$1/3/7d$. This seems a significant payment even when compared with those in Ecclesall Bierlow from the wealthy Josh Ibberson ($17/7\frac{1}{2}d$) and from Benjamin Plant's friend and nephew Samuel Broomhead Ward ($\$2/3/3\frac{3}{4}d$) who was already the owner of the substantial property Mount Pleasant in Ecclesall (Chapters 10 and 12).

11.3.3 Little Sheffield entries

The entries listed in the 1793-5 rate books, under Little Sheffield, seem to continue on for the whole of the rest of Ecclesall though the entries shown in Table 11.4 appear near the beginning of these and they are apparently for Little Sheffield itself, at least in part. These entries suggest that Benjamin and John Plant may have been living close to each other in Little Sheffield, probably in fact both at the Broom Close site which subsequently became widely known as 'Plant's Yard'. It may be noted, in particular, that the first of the many rate books summarised by Table 11.4 is for 15th Jan 1793 and it states '*Benjamin Plant for his Yard*' — as has already been mentioned (section 11.1.3), it is (as yet) uncertain *exactly* how this relates to the pre-Enclosure Award entry '*Late Plant yard*' which may perhaps have belonged to a Richard Kent alias Plont.

Benjamin's 1793 properties include '*Broomhall Land*', which was probably across the Porter Brook from the Little Sheffield site of Plant's Yard and which may have related to the Plants' initial

²⁶*Peeps into the Past*, edited A.B.Bell, 1909, pps 60, 61, 139.

(a) 1793: 12d in \$		(b) 1795: 12d in \$	
...		...	
Benjamin Plant for his Yard	$2/4\frac{1}{2}$	Benjamin Plant for Ho & Gard	$2/4\frac{1}{2}$
do for own & Smiths Allotment	$5\frac{1}{2}$	do for New Barn Allotment	3
do for Broomhall Land	$3/2\frac{3}{4}$	do for Broomhall Land	$3/2\frac{3}{4}$
do for Ibberson Land	$3/11\frac{1}{2}$	do for J Ibberson Land	$3/11\frac{1}{2}$
John Plant for <i>Ho^s & Gardⁿ</i>	$1/9$	do for Dukes Allotment	$3/9\frac{1}{4}$
do his 2 ^d House	$7\frac{1}{2}$	do for Land at Broomhall Wheel	$3/3\frac{1}{2}$
3 ^d	$11\frac{1}{4}$	JOHN PLANT'S ENTRIES...	
4 th do	$9\frac{3}{4}$...SAME AS FOR 1793	
do for Allotment	3	...	
...		...	

Table 11.4: Some post-Enclosure rate book entries

connection with Sheffield, as was indicated near the beginning of this Chapter. Benjamin's 1793 properties also include '*Ibbersons Land*' which will be discussed later, in Chapter 13, in connection with Land Tax records for land 2 miles to the west²⁷.

In the 1793 rate books, both Benjamin Plant's and John Plant's properties include '*Allotments*' which were no doubt the small lands allotted to them in the 1788 Enclosure Awards. It seems that Benjamin had a '*New Barn*' on his allotment by the time of the 2 Feb 1794 rate book (*cf* Table 11.4) and there is also mention, in an 1802 deed, of a barn for this allotment, as was described in section 11.2.4.

11.3.4 Additional Acquisitions around 1794

Table 11.4 also indicates that, between 1793 and 1795, Benjamin Plant acquired additional substantial lands described as '*Land at Broomhall Wheel*' and '*Dukes Allotment*', whose locations are discussed below. These acquisitions appear to relate to Benjamin Plant's industrial ventures, in proximity to his wife's family, as will be indicated more fully in Chapter 13.

Broomhall Wheel

The Broomhall Wheel was near the site that was subsequently widely known as Plant's Yard and near the Stalker Wheel which had been in the hands of Benjamin Plant's wife's family since 1765. The Broomhall Wheel, which was at the southern edge of the Broom-hall estate, appears to have been built in the mid 18th century as it does not appear in a 1742 rate book but it is recorded in a 1759 survey field-book as Thomas Newbould's wheel and dam immediately to the south of the Broomhall Mill²⁸. This Wheel is remarkable for apparently being in the tenancy of the Newbould family throughout the whole of its existence. As was mentioned in section 11.2.4, there appears to have been a close relationship between the Newboulds and Benjamin Plant. There are repeated mentions of the Newboulds in the book based on the diary of one of Benjamin Plant's nephews²⁹ where it is mentioned that a sister (Mrs Mary Watson) of the first wife (Hannah Watkinson) of the close friend and nephew, S.B.Ward, of Benjamin Plant married into this family by marrying the Sheffield Moor merchant, Thomas Newbould. This Thomas Newbould was a grandson of the earlier Thomas Newbould (d 1782) of Newbould Lane³⁰.

²⁷This was around, or just beyond, the *Rustlings* property that was described in section 11.2.4.

²⁸By 1850, shortly before the Broomhall Wheel's disappearance, the rate books record a dual function, as an edge-tool wheel-house and a saw wheel-house, though only a single 16'2'' 11hp Water Wheel is described in 1830 (*Water Power on the Sheffield Rivers* edited by D.Crossley, 1989).

²⁹*Peeps into the Past*, edited by A.B.Bell, 1909, pps 7 and 11.

³⁰Newbould Lane is just to the north of the old site of Broom Hall. It now adjoins the school that was, until the recent abolition of selective entrance (the so-called 11 plus), Britain's most academically successful non-fee-paying school (King Edward VII Grammar School) which had been formed partly from T.A.Ward's alma mater, the Sheffield Grammar

Dukes Allotment

It is interesting to note that allotment *No.*101 for example, of the 1788 Enclosure Award, was granted to the Duke of Norfolk and that this allotment apparently adjoined the Little Sheffield site subsequently known widely as Plant's Yard³¹. However, it seems unlikely that such a small allotment (1 square pole) would attract the large Poor Rate payment attributed to the '*Dukes Allotment*' in Table 11.4(b).

Certainly, the Duke had obtained several larger allotments on Sheffield Moor, for example, as part of the 1788 Award but it seems more likely that the above reference to the '*Dukes Allotment*' applied to land to the east of The Moor. This area was known as Alsops Fields, which was private land that was not part of the common allotted in the 1788 Act, though it was contemporaneously being developed as leased allotments, between 1776 and 1793. Just such a location (*viz* Pond Lane) for land leased from the Norfolk family is indicated in Benjamin Plant's 1805 will which explicitly mentions his '*Leasehold Messuages Lands and Tenements situate in or near Pond Lane in Sheffield aforesaid which I hold by lease under the Norfolk family*'.

Thus, this land referred to as *Dukes Allotment* was apparently near the home of Benjamin Plant's brother-in-law, the 1790 Master Cutler, Joseph Ward, and near to one of the Ward's major industrial enterprises, the Pond Tilt, as will be discussed further in Chapter 13.

11.3.5 Summary

The post-Enclosure Award records provide clear indications that the Plants held several properties in Ecclesall. Some of these had been held since before the first Parliamentary Act (1779-88) of Enclosure near Sheffield. A few small allotments were awarded to Benjamin and John Plant in 1788, as part of this Ecclesall Act, and there are also records of some subsequent property acquisitions particularly by the bellows maker Benjamin Plant.

The fate of such Plant properties, as well as the arrival near Sheffield of further Plants from this Duckmanton Plant family, can be traced through the early nineteenth century with the help of further property records. These records help to reveal the development of the Plant family name near Sheffield up to and beyond the mid-nineteenth century, by when Census data for example helps to provide additional details.

The development of a Plant base in Sheffield will be described further in Chapters 13 and 14 whereas Chapter 12 will first outline some of the known information about the bellows maker Benjamin Plant.

School.

³¹The public footpath provision of the 1788 Award describes '*One public footway from the ancient enclosure belonging to Mary Battie at Little Sheffield eastwards, into and along the Duke of Norfolk's allotment 101 into the Sheffield turnpike road.*' Carolus Paulus identifies this footway as Cross Walk (*cf* Chapter 10).